# INSTRUCTIONS,

# Regulations *and* Prayers,

FOR THE

# INDULGENCES

IN THE

# WESTERN DISTRICT.

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Printed in 1764.

1607/5597.

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR INDULGENCES.

IT has been the constant doctrine of the Church of God, that, notwithstanding the sovereign Judge remits to sinners, upon their repentance, the guilt of their sin, and the eternity of torments due to it, he nevertheless reserves a temporary punishment, which he subjects them to. This punishment he designs, to serve as some atonement for the insult offered to his sacred Majesty, and as a curb upon the Delinquents, to restrain them from future transgressions. Many are the instances known of this conduct in the Almighty. He was pleased to pardon Adam

the guilt of his Diſobedience, but he ſentenced him, and all his poſterity, to the penalty of death, and many other miſeries. The Iſraelites were pardoned their ſin of murmuring againſt God, but were nevertheleſs condemned to die in the Deſart, and their children only allowed to enter the Land of Promiſe. In like manner Almighty God forgave David his crime of adultery upon his repentance, but denounced heavy judgments againſt him, from which with all his tears and ſupplications he could not prevail to be releaſed.

In this manner did Almighty God in former ages puniſh even thoſe whom he had received into his favour. The ſame method he likewiſe obſerves with us: and it muſt be acknowledged, we deſerve much more to feel the ſcourge of his juſtice, as our ingratitude is much greater. We have been bleſſed with the light of the Chriſtian Faith; we have been favoured with greater abundance of graces, which flow more plentifully ſince the Son of God

God has vouchſafed to ſpill his ſacred Blood for our Redemption; at our Baptiſm we were bountifully cleanſed, both from all ſtain of guilt, and from all puniſhment due to it; we then promiſed to renounce ſin, and conſecrated ourſelves to the ſervice of God: If then we break ſo ſolemn an engagement, if we trample under foot ſo many bleſſings, by wilfully rebelling againſt God, and violating his laws, what can we expect but ſeverity for ſuch ingratitude? But if, upon our returning to him in a true ſpirit of repentance, he has promiſed mercifully to receive us, and to cancel our ſins, and the everlaſting puniſhment they deſerve, we have certainly no reaſon to complain that he is pleaſed to exact from us ſome degree of ſatisfaction.

To anſwer this ſatisfaction, which muſt be performed in this life or the next, it has been the practice of the Church from the beginning, to impoſe penitential works upon ſinners. At firſt theſe penances laſted ſeveral years, and ſometimes the Penitent's

whole life, in proportion to the crime, and were accompanied with the greateſt auſterities. They were called *Canonical Penances*. Sometimes theſe rigorous long ſeverities were mitigated and ſhortened, as St. Cyprian tells us, but that was done in conſideration and at the requeſt of thoſe who were going to offer up to God the noble ſacrifice of their blood by Martyrdom; or when it was found that the Penitent gave ſuch unqueſtionable marks of extraordinary fervour as ſeemed deſerving of indulgence; or elſe, when it was apprehended that too great ſeverity might throw the Penitent into deſpondency, which was the reaſon St. Paul remitted to the inceſtuous Corinthian part of the penance he had enjoined him. Thus, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, were ſuch relaxations or indulgences granted by the paſtors of the Church, when good reaſons ſeemed to warrant them. In the ſucceeding ages theſe relaxations became more frequent and more general.

When

When corruption had ſpread its influence, and fervour and piety were ſeen to cool in the hearts of Chriſtians, the Church, like a compaſſionate Mother, grieved at this depraved alteration in her children, and wiſhing to reclaim by any effectual means thoſe who were gone aſtray, offered to receive them with open arms upon a ſincere repentance, to relax of her former ſeverities, and to exchange them into other pious works more eaſy to be accompliſhed. This benevolent offer raiſed the devotion of the faithful, it occaſioned innumerable multitudes to flock to Rome, to proſtrate themſelves before the holy bodies of St. Peter and Paul, which was the condition required in place of other ſatisfactions. Thus was Rome crowded with an infinite number of perſons at the time that Pope Boniface VIII. firſt inſtituted the *Jubilee*. They embraced with alacrity the hardſhips of a long journey, to partake of ſo extraordinary a favour. The ſucceſſive Popes willing to condeſcend ſtill further, in conſideration

of ſo many perſons who were incapable of ſuch a journey, granted the ſame favour of the Jubilee to all who ſhould exert their fervour in performing at home other penitential works aſſigned to them. Upon other occaſions, at the urgent deſire of the faithful, and for particular exigencies, theſe kinds of diſpenſations for relaxing the puniſhment due to ſin have been extended and multiplied by the Holy See, and uſually called *Indulgences*. Thus in proceſs of time it has happened, that, from ſome neceſſary reaſons on one hand, and the ſloth and tepidity of Chriſtians on another, the Church, in order to prevail upon all to quit their evil ways and return to the God of mercies, has vouchſafed to iſſue forth frequent grants, ſometimes of a *Jubilee*, ſometimes of a *plenary Indulgence*, that is, the diſcharge of all ſatisfaction due for ſin, to be obtained upon ſuch eaſy terms.

From what has been ſaid, it is plain, that the purpoſe of Indulgences is not to remit the guilt of ſin, nor the eternal

nal punishment due to it; this must be done by the Sacrament of Penance: nor is it a leave to commit sin, as has been sometimes misrepresented, and is a notion which the Catholicks abhor. By an Indulgence nothing more is meant than the remission of that temporal punishment, which remains due from the sinner, after his sin is forgiven.

It must not be thought that the Church exceeds her power in dispensing these grants, as it is plain that Christ himself gave this power to St. Peter and his successors, when he said to him: *To thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, shall be loosed in heaven.* Matth. xvi. 19.

On this foundation the Church has always believed, that our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has entrusted her with the dispensation of his favours. The numberless excruciating sufferings he went thro' for the redemption

of mankind, the ſtreams of blood he ſhed, while one ſingle drop was ſufficient to waſh away the ſins of the whole world, and in fine, his Death upon the Croſs, have made up an infinite treaſure of merit, which he has depoſited in his Church, to be diſtributed as ſhe judges neceſſary. This treaſure is likewiſe increaſed by the abundant merits of the Bleſſed Virgin, of the Martyrs, Confeſſors, and all the holy Elect of God, which merits, tho' they borrow indeed all their worth from the Merits of Chriſt, he graciouſly allows to be applied to us in virtue of the *Communion of Saints*, that is, in virtue of that happy mutual communication of ſpiritual goods, which he has eſtabliſhed among all the members of his Church.

It is neceſſary however to obſerve, that, though the benefit of a *plenary Indulgence* expunges our debt of temporal puniſhment, we muſt not thence conclude we are exempted from all further works of penance. For, who can be ſure he has ſo perfectly fulfilled

all conditions, as to have obtained the full effect of the Indulgence? Beſides, it is certain we every day offend the Almighty, we have therefore every day ſome atonement to make: and our Saviour has pronounced penance to be indiſpenſibly neceſſary to all ſinners: *Unleſs you do penance, you ſhall all periſh.* Luke xiii. 5. Penitential labours are therefore due for the expiation of our ſins. The ſame we ought alſo willingly to embrace, as they are on other accounts highly profitable to us. They withdraw us from the alluring pleaſures of the world, and lead us in the path of ſuffering, which our Redeemer himſelf has traced out for us. To ſuch works, God, in his gracious mercy, has promiſed an increaſe of grace in this life, and a crown of glory hereafter. The greateſt Saints, we find, practiſed the greateſt auſterities, and chearfully ſubmitted to drink the bitter cup of Mortification. Where is the Sanctity equal to that of the Bleſſed Virgin, who ever remained unſpotted and undefiled, and yet what pains and

anguiſhes did ſhe not endure, and with what humility and reſignation? Where is now the man that has attained the purity of life of St. John Baptiſt, who was even ſanctified from his mother's womb? yet what were not his penitential auſterities? He lived in a deſart, ſpent his time in prayer, fed upon wild honey and locuſts, and was cloathed with a garment made of camel's hair. If ſuch were the mortifications and rigorous practices of thoſe who had never ſullied their innocence, can we think of paſſing our lives in eaſe, who are guilty of ſo many prevarications?

The Church, in condeſcending to grant Indulgences, does not intend to favour ſloth and indolence. As our nature is infirm, and unable very often to go thro' ſuch a courſe of penance as would be proportionate to the enormity of our ſins, this deficiency is ſupplied by Indulgences; what our weakneſs renders impoſſible to us, theſe grants help to accompliſh. Senſible therefore of the importance of theſe favours, let us carefully diſpoſe ourſelves

to

to obtain the benefit of them. The chief diſpoſition is a ſincere repentance for our ſins, without which no Indulgence whatever can avail us. We muſt beg mercy of God with a contrite heart, with a true ſenſe of our ingratitude, with humility, and a true ſpirit of mortification. *Turn to me*, ſays the Lord, *with your whole heart, in faſting, weeping and mourning*. Joel ii. 2. But as the works of mortification, uſually aſſigned for gaining an Indulgence, are ſmall when compared with the puniſhment we deſerve, let this deficiency be compenſated by the intenſity of our compunction, and the warmth of our devotion. Such is the intention of the Church; ſhe expects, that when relaxations are granted in our penitential works, the diſpoſitions of the heart towards God ſhould increaſe in proportion. The reaſon which moved Pope Clement VI. to extend the Jubilee to every fiftieth year, was, as he tells us himſelf, *that the devotion of the faithful might increaſe, their faith ſhine more bright, their hope receive new vigour,*

*and*

*and their charity become more fervent.* With theſe diſpoſitions let us approach the Throne of grace, and hope to receive that mercy we aſk for. Let us acknowledge with gratitude the ſignal pledge of his Love, which our bountiful Redeemer has left to his Church, in granting the power of Indulgences, and let us be thoroughly ſenſible how great is the advantage that may accrue to us from them. The whole treaſure of the Church is laid open, the fulneſs of God's mercy is offered to us, we owe an enormous debt to the divine juſtice, and here is put into our hands wherewith to acquit it: *What is there more,* ſays the Lord, *that I ought to have done to my vineyard, and have not done it?* Iſai. v. 4.

RE-

# REGULATIONS FOR THE INDULGENCES *in the Weſtern Diſtrict.*

THE Biſhops, Apoſtolic Vicars in this kingdom, have been long ſince impowered by the Holy See, to grant a *plenary Indulgence* three times a year.

The three Solemnities we appoint for theſe Indulgences are,

*Firſt*, The Solemnity of *Chriſtmas*, with the Octave.

*Secondly*, The Solemnity of *Eaſter*, beginning with *Palm-Sunday* and ending with *Low-Sunday*.

*Thirdly*, The Solemnity of *Whitſunday*, with the Octave.

The conditions required for gaining theſe Indulgences are, 1. To go to Confeſſion and Communion. 2. To offer up ſome prayers for the peace and unity of the Catholic Church; for our holy Father the Pope; for the Converſion of Infidels, Heretics, and Schiſmatics;

tics; for union and concord among Chriſtian princes, and for the Bleſſing of God upon this Nation. 3. To give ſome alms to the poor, according to one's faculties.

It is to be obſerved, the Confeſſion may be made either in the morning before Communion, or any time the preceding day; the other conditions to be fulfilled on the day of Communion, or on the preceding evening after Confeſſion.

II.

In the year 1753, the Holy See granted to this Nation four other *Plenary Indulgences*, for which we aſſign the following Solemnities:

*Firſt, Candlemas-day*, with the Octave.

*Secondly*, The Feaſt of *Corpus Chriſti*, with the Octave.

*Thirdly*, The *Aſſumption of the Bleſſed Virgin*, with the Octave.

*Fourthly*, The Feaſt of *All-Saints*, with the Octave.

The conditions for obtaining theſe *Indulgences* are, 1. To go to Confeſſion and Communion. 2. After Communion

nion to offer up on the ſame day ſome prayers for the peace of the Church of God throughout the world, eſpecially in this Nation; and this to be done in ſome Chapel in which Maſs is ſaid. 3. To be diſpoſed to aſſiſt the poor with alms according to one's abilities, when the occaſion offers; or to frequent Catechiſm and Sermons, when it can be done without great inconvenience; or elſe, to viſit, aſſiſt, and comfort ſick or dying perſons.

III.

It is to be obſerved that Pope Clement XII. in order to excite all the faithful to acquire and preſerve a due knowledge of the Chriſtian Doctrine, granted ſome *Indulgences*, which are ſtill in force. *Firſt*, An *Indulgence* of ſeven years and ſeven times forty days, to any one who, upon going to Confeſſion and Communion, ſhall on the ſame day devoutly aſſiſt at the Catechiſm performed publicly in a Chapel. *Secondly*, A *Plenary Indulgence* three times a year, on *Chriſtmas-day*, *Eaſter-day*, and the Feaſt of St. *Peter and Paul*,

to

to all those who constantly assist at the Catechism, either in teaching or hearing it, provided they Confess and Communicate upon those Festivals, and pray for the usual intentions of the Church.

Of the three mentioned Holydays, two have already other Indulgences affixed to them; but the third, namely, the Feast of St Peter and Paul, may be used by the faithful for the gaining of this Indulgence.

PRAYERS

# PRAYERS

*That may be uſed for the Intentions of an* INDULGENCE.

HAVE mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy.

And according to the multitude of thy mercies, blot out my iniquity.

Waſh me ſtill more from my iniquity, and cleanſe me from my ſin.

Becauſe I know my iniquity, and my ſin is always before me.

To thee alone have I ſinned, and have done evil before thee; that thou may'ſt be found juſt in thy words, and may'ſt overcome when thou art judged.

For, behold I was conceived in iniquities, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.

For, behold thou haſt loved truth: the dark and hidden things of thy wiſdom thou haſt made manifeſt to me.

Thou wilt ſprinkle me with hyſſop, and I ſhall be cleanſed: thou wilt waſh me, and I ſhall be made whiter than ſnow.

Thou

Thou wilt afford joy and gladneſs to my Hearing, and the Bones that were humbled ſhall rejoice.

Turn away thy face from my ſins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right ſpirit in my bowels.

Caſt me not away from thy face; and take not away thy Holy Spirit from me.

Reſtore unto me the joy of thy ſalvation; and ſtrengthen me with a perfect ſpirit.

I will teach thy ways to the unjuſt; and the wicked ſhall turn to thee.

Deliver me from blood, O God, the God of my ſalvation; and my tongue ſhall extol thy juſtice.

Lord, thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth ſhall ſet forth thy praiſe.

Becauſe if thou had'ſt liked Sacrifice, verily I would have given it: with Burnt-offerings thou wilt not be delighted.

A troubled ſpirit is a Sacrifice to God: a contrite and humble heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe.

In

In thy good pleaſure, O Lord, be gracious to Sion; that the walls of Jeruſalem may be built up.

Then wilt thou accept a ſacrifice of juſtice, oblations, and burnt-offerings; then ſhall they lay calves upon thy altar.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghoſt.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever ſhall be, world without end. *Amen.*

*Vers.* O Lord, deal not with us according to our ſins.

*Reſp.* Nor reward us according to our iniquities.

*Let us pray.*

ALmighty and moſt merciful God, who madeſt water to ſpring out of the rock to refreſh the people periſhing with thirſt; ſtrike our hard hearts, and draw from them the tears of repentance, that we may truly bewail our ſins, and through thy mercy obtain pardon of them.

Out

Out of thy clemency, O Lord, ſhew thy unſpeakable mercy to us; that ſo thou may'ſt both acquit us of all our ſins, and deliver us from the puniſhments we deſerve for them.

O God, who by ſin art offended, and by penance pacified, mercifully regard the prayers of thy people, who make ſupplication to thee, and turn away the ſcourges of thy anger, which we deſerve for our ſins.

Grant, we beſeech thee, Almighty God, that the interceſſion of the Bleſſed Virgin *Mary*, and of all the holy Apoſtles, Martyrs, Confeſſors, and Virgins, may bring comfort to our ſouls; and that, as we celebrate their merits, we may feel the effects of their patronage.

We beſeech thee, O Lord, mercifully to hear the prayers of thy Church, that all troubles and errors being removed, ſhe may ſerve thee in freedom and ſecurity.

O God, the Paſtor and Governor of all the faithful, look down in thy mercy on thy ſervant N. whom thou haſt ap-

appointed chief Paſtor of thy Church: grant, we beſeech thee, that, by word and example, he may edify all thoſe that are under his charge; and with the flock entruſted to him, may come at length to eternal happineſs.

O Almighty and Everlaſting God, who ſaveſt all, and would'ſt have none to periſh; look upon the ſouls that are ſeduced by the deceits of Satan; that, by renouncing all error of Infidelity, Hereſy, or Schiſm, they may repent, and come to the unity of thy truth.

O God, from whom are all holy deſires, righteous counſels, and juſt works, give to thy ſervants that peace which the world cannot give; that, our hearts being diſpoſed to keep thy commandments, and the fear of enemies taken away, the times through thy protection may be peaceable.

Protect this Nation, Almighty God, we beſeech thee, by thy conſtant mercy; and, becauſe human infirmity is not able to ſubſiſt without thy help, may thy goodneſs always defend us from

from all that is hurtful, and direct us in the way of ſalvation. Through our Lord JESUS CHRIST thy Son, who liveth and reigneth, with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

May the Almighty and Merciful God grant us peace and comfort of mind, the amendment of our lives, time to do penance for our ſins, the grace and conſolation of the Holy Ghoſt, and perſeverance in good works. *Amen.*

C. R.